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CHAPTER XXV

ON MARRIAGE

Although among the Ainu in olden times little children were sometimes betrothed to one another by their parents, the young men and women, as a rule, did their own courting freely, the marriage arrangements alone being left to the fathers and mothers of the ones affianced, and at all times both the young man and his choice had a final say in the matter. It was also thought as proper for a girl to propose to a young man as for a young man to "pop the question" himself. It was a continuous "Leap Year" with them. If the young man made the first proposal, he asked his father and mother to call upon the parents of his choice and try to arrange the marriage, but if it was the young woman who did the wooing, she would get her own father or mother to call upon the parents of her loved one. If all went well, the marriage took place, but, if the elders would not agree, the young people have been known to take the law into their own hands and walk off. 582 583 [562]

After a father had duly called on a friend and asked the hand of a daughter for his son in marriage, the following little ceremony took place between them, if all had gone well. The father of the bridegroom took a small sword which he placed in the hands of the bride's father, and said, "This sword is a pledge of betrothal; take it and worship. Do thou pray to the Goddess of Fire." Then, having received the sword, the bride's father would worship the Fire Goddess, offer libations of *sakĕ* and say, "We have here and now 585 [584]

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Ari. That I cannot tell. 825

Self. If not, did an eagle find human babies somewhere, seize them with his talons and carry them off and rear them as his own?

Ari. I do not know. My people have not told me.

Self. Well, I do not see anything resembling an eagle about you. What is that on your face, a beak?

"No. It is a nose." "What is that on your head; feathers?" "No; hair." "So it is! So you have no feathers, and your voice is certainly not at all like the screech of an eagle; it is more like the growl of a bear sometimes. And I don't for a moment suppose you have ever heard of your ancestors having laid eggs, have you?" He said he had not, nor had he seen people half bird and half man. Evolution in this sense was not known to him. The end of it all was that he concluded that the Ainu, in so far as the present race is concerned, belonged to the genus homo. Mr. Ari went away quite happy and some time later became a Christian.

A few years after this, Mr. Ari came and asked me 584 to find him a wife, as he wished to make himself a home, and, he said, there were no young girls in his hamlet from whom he might choose. After a good deal of looking round, I managed to find a pure Japanese young lady who had been adopted by an Ainu woman in infancy and brought up as her own child, [304 excepting that her foster parents did not tattoo her. 597] It has been a very happy union and today they have a family of 11 children, one having died in infancy. The eldest daughter is at present with us doing cooking, and the eldest son is a veterinary surgeon. Another son is in the army, and another daughter is a dressmaker.

The Ainu have a good deal to say about eagles at 825 times, and the following legend is thoroughly characteristic and contains a very mine of old world lore.

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539 831 181 Yai-mah of the Hollows was a very beautiful maiden. All admired the damsel and loved her. She was tall and broad-shouldered. Her back was as straight as an arrow. Her arms and limbs were round and shapely. She carried her head high and with grace, and her step was quick, firm and springy. She was as pure and innocent as a beautiful lily. She had magnificent dark hair reaching nearly to her shoulders, and it was glossy like a ripe plum in full bloom. Her brows were thick and her eye-lashes long. Her eyes were of a lovely dark brown colour and very bright. To look at her was to be fascinated by her, for she was always as full of grace and charm as she was lively and pretty. Every part of her bespoke joy and vigour. Her face was like a full moon, round, glossy and fat, and the tattoo round her mouth was of a glowing dark blue, well cut in and beautiful to behold. Her smile, courted by all alike, was bewitching, and her voice sounded like the jingle of metal bars when they knock together. She could weave garments and sew better than any other damsel, and her embroidery was beyond compare. She could tell stories, sing, and dance, and she could also play the harp and hum cradle songs. She could bring in more water without spilling, and carry bigger loads of wood than any other woman, and her garden plot was always well kept. She was a model in every way and had no blemish. She could cook beautifully, and her dishes were savoury and appetizing. Her chestnut, fish-roe, and millet dumplings were enjoyed and relished by all. If Kutri was like a well-grown ash tree of the mountain forest, Yai-mah was like a lovely flower of the sheltered hollows.

539 831 584 Kutri one day went down to the Hollows where Yai-mah lived, and as he went along he met her in the path not far from her home. When they saw each other they were both struck as by a blow. They came to a sudden standstill and neither could take eyes off

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KUTRI AND YAI-MAH COURTING
Drawn by T. Katahira, an Ainu

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the other. They admired one another's beauty and handsome form, helplessly. There they stood, eyeing each other with unbounded amazement and wondrous fascination. Instead of making way for Kutri to pass, as she, being a woman, ought to have done, Yai-mah stood in the middle of the path, rooted to the ground, and gazed at him as though mesmerized. Neither could pass the other. Though they saw one another now for the first time, yet they suddenly began to overflow with love for each other. Nay, as a loving sister, Yai-mah rushed to him and placed her head upon his shoulder. Kutri took her by the hand and they stepped to one side of the path and seated themselves side by side on a log. Long did they linger and lovingly did they sit and talk. Yea, till the evening shadows began to lengthen did they abide there in great contentment of heart. Then, as if waking from a beautiful dream, Kutri quietly gave Yai-mah his small knife and sheath as a pledge, and she, in return, affectionately handed him a piece of her own embroidery. Thus did they pledge one another their troth and then they each returned to their separate homes in joy and gladness.

But alas, Kutri found that there were grave objections to his marriage with Yai-mah. In the joy of his newly found love for her, he had quite forgotten that when a mere baby in arms, his father-chief had betrothed him to the infant daughter of a certain chief who lived in another village. The child's name was Ara-shik. This child had grown up to be as ugly as Yai-mah was beautiful, and she was idle, dirty, useless, and a backbiting chatterbox. Moreover, as her name implies, she had but one good eye, for the other was very weak. Kutri had no love for her and had never wished the betrothal to be consummated. Had he not, indeed, many times declared before all that he would never marry her, come what might? But the two chiefs were as stones and would not soften. He

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himself was just as obdurate. His aversion to that one-eyed, unlovable damsel was fixed and absolute. There was consequently much unhappiness in his home where bickerings and quarrels were the order of the day.

Yai-mah also had been betrothed when a baby to another child in a village some distance away, Wenku by name, and when she was told that the early betrothal could not be broken off, she wept bitterly and began to pine away. Her proposed husband was a very poor, ill-formed, and fiery-tempered man, and as jealous as jealous could be. He was greatly feared by all and not the least so by Yai-mah herself. This man could neither hunt nor fish, and the very dogs everywhere shunned him. Moreover, as he had a partly withered arm, he was unable to shoot with the bow. He was a worthless drag on his family and the people of the village scorned him. His scowl would shame the worst of demons. Yai-mah had not a particle of love for him and declared she would rather die than become his bride. When he heard this and also that she desired to wed Kutri, he became more jealous than ever, if that were possible, and as fierce as an enraged and hungry man-eater bear. And poor Yai-mah had much trouble and shed many bitter tears. It was indeed a very unhappy state of affairs.

Neither could forget their love for the other, nor, indeed, had they a wish to do so. And so they felt they must meet again. They came together one evening and settled to flee away secretly by night, and go to live by themselves among the mountains, far away from their people. They appointed a place to which each should by stealth carry some necessaries, a few at a time, so as to attract no attention from prying eyes, and hide them carefully away against the hour of departure. Yai-mah took her best embroidered dress, her waist-band, which was ornamented with

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brass rings, her ear-rings, beads, and necklace, her harp, a weaving loom, some thread, a cooking pot, two wooden spoons, two bowls and eating cups, a water ladle, a small knife, a few dumplings to eat on the way, a few dried fish, and a little millet. These she tied up in a neat bundle and rolled in a mat. Nor did she forget to fix all up securely, ready for a sudden departure, in a carrying-sling, the headpiece of which she had made soft and beautifully ornamented. When all was prepared, she hid it away very carefully among some bushes by a little stream, and then returned home to await the moment arranged for the elopement.

Kutri brought a long and short knife, an axe, his fine yew bow, elegantly decorated with thin slithers of cherry bark, a quiver well filled with arrows, a good supply of aconite poison, some stout string, a few strong sandals made of deer and fish skins, a cup and moustache-lifter, a bear-skin bag containing tinder and a fire drill, a fox skull for divination and a tray or two upon which to place skull fetishes and offerings to the deities. He also carried some bear's galls as medicine. Ever thinking of his dearly beloved Yai-mah, he took one thing he believed she might possibly forget, and which as it happened she surely did overlook, namely, a pair of scissors. Later, when they unpacked their bundles in their new home and he produced the scissors, her pleasure was unbounded. Her face lit up with true love and her eyes flashed with joy. Her beautiful moon-like face beamed with smiles. She, too, had thought that Kutri might possibly forget something, and, so, not to be outdone, she produced from her work-bag a fine deer decoy and handed it to him. Great was his pleasure and loud his laughter when he saw it, for he found that he had quite forgotten to bring one! The rafters of their little hut rang again and again with the ripple of Yai-mah's lovely voice, and the musical roar of Kutri's melodious accompani-

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grave and regarded the foreigners with great reverence. They then raised their hands and placed them on top of their heads and brought their hands down over their faces and beards and uttered a whining noise, ending with a sharp cry like the bark of a dog. 576

I have never seen this ceremony carried out in full, as described, but I doubt not the description is correct, for I have observed both the holding of the hands together and the stroking of the beard. Another form of the ceremony (Pl. CVII) represents the meeting of brother and sister, also from Mr. Greey. 576 583

The man held the woman's hand for a few seconds, then suddenly releasing his hold, grasped her by both ears and uttered the Aino cry. Then they stroked one another down the face and shoulders.

This form did not come under my observation, nor did I witness any such performances as the same author describes in the meeting of father and son.

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS.

The best account of the marriage customs is that given by Dr. Scheube, from which the following particulars are abstracted: the Ainos marry early, the men at about the age of 18, the women at 16; polygamy is permitted, but not much practiced; morality between the unmarried is not very strictly enforced, but children born through such relations are no bar to future marriage. 582 [845 836]

The marriage customs resemble those of the Japanese. The parents usually select wives or husbands for their children. A young man rarely courts his wife directly, but through a go-between. As soon as the matter is satisfactorily arranged by the latter, the young man sends a portion of saké to the parents of his intended bride. After some time the latter sends a gift of saké and an *inao*, or God-stick, to the bridegroom. This is a sign that the marriage is to take place on the next day. In the evening of that day the neighbors assemble at the house of the bridegroom's parents. The bride comes in company with her parents and the intermediary. They depart about midnight to re-assemble the next morning, and the feasting goes on for 2 or 3 days, according to the circumstances of the young couple, who from henceforth live in the house of the man's parents. 584 585 [541]

Not many children are born; usually 3 or 4, and more boys than girls. The children are suckled until 4 or 5 years of age. 163 853

Divorces are not common. A man can only send his wife back to her parents by obtaining their consent. 586

BURIAL CUSTOMS.

Burial usually takes place on the day of death or on the following day. The friends and relatives assemble, bringing with them food and saké, which are placed before the body and, after the burial, shared by all in common. The corpse is clothed and placed in a wooden coffin, 764